



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 26, 2003

3:00 p.m. Greensboro, NC

Blue Room (County Commissioners' Briefing Room)
Old Guilford County Courthouse

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Don Vaughan	Greensboro City Council
Robbie Perkins	Greensboro City Council
Mary Rakestraw	Greensboro City Council
Doug Galyon	NC Board of Transportation
Bob Landreth	Guilford County Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT/MPO	Jerry Dudeck	NCDOT Statewide Planning
Scott Rhine	PART	Gregg Danzer	Town of Pleasant Garden
Craig McKinney	GDOT	Kimberly Hinton	NCDOT Statewide Planning
Jeff Sovich	GDOT/MPO	Tom Martin	Greensboro Planning Dept.
Angie Nail	Emert Reporting	Undrea Major	NCDOT – Project Planning
Paul Muschick	<i>News & Record</i>	Charles Cox	NCDOT – Project Development

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m.

Sandy Carmany yielded the floor to Kimberly Hinton, who introduced herself as Greensboro's new Urban Area Coordinator in the Statewide Planning Branch.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2003

Bob Landreth moved for the approval of the January 21, 2003 minutes. Don Vaughan seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as prepared.

2. MPO Self-Certification

Jeff Sovich advised that each year, the MPO must certify that its planning process complies with federal requirements including the Clean Air Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and others. This certification is distinct from the triennial USDOT certification, which involves on-site evaluation of the MPO's record-keeping methods, public notification procedures, and other details.

The recommended action is to certify the MPO's planning process for fiscal year 2004. Bob Landreth moved for the approval. Mary Rakestraw seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. FY 2003-2004 Unified Planning Work Program Adoption

Tyler Meyer reviewed the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP accounts for the use of federal and state planning grant funds. Anticipated activities must be identified in the UPWP to be eligible for reimbursement. The UPWP also serves as a guide to the MPO's transportation planning activities throughout the fiscal year.

The proposed funding sources table identifies anticipated planning activities and planning grant fund use. The categories in the funding sources table are consistent with other MPOs in the state, facilitating consistent administration.

Major planning projects over the next fiscal year include the Transportation Systems Plan (which will include a comprehensive update of the Greensboro Thoroughfare Plan, which has not been done since 1989), and a Congestion Management System. Other key projects include the Triad Travel Model Update, the enhancement of the multi-modal transportation plan (including a GTA Short Range Transit Services Plan Update, the Long Range Public Transportation Plan, and continuing bicycle and pedestrian planning efforts), support for area land use planning efforts, and conducting a range of other studies.

The recommended action is for the TAC to adopt the Unified Planning Work Program for fiscal year 2004. Don Vaughan moved for approval. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

4. STP-DA Program: MPO Policy Recommendation

Jeff Sovich noted that as a Transportation Management Area, Greensboro has the authority to direct Surface Transportation Program Direct Apportionment (STP-DA) funds. These funds are eligible for use on a wide range of projects. Greensboro's allocation of STP-DA funds is expected to be approximately \$3 million per year however, the exact amount will depend on each year's appropriation at the federal level.

MPO staff have worked with NCDOT and other TMAs in the state to develop a program guidance document, which will ensure that the STP-DA program is administered so that it preserves local authority and flexibility while maintaining an appropriate level of administrative efficiency. The STP-DA guidance establishes project management responsibilities at state and local levels. The guidance also addresses MPO need for flexibility and NCDOT's fiscal management needs, and it requests MPOs to notify the NCDOT of their intent to direct funds.

The recommended action is to adopt the resolution of intent to direct STP-DA funds. Robbie Perkins moved for approval. Don Vaughan seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Business Items/Potential Action Items

1. NCDOT Update: Triad Center Drive/NC 68 Interchange (U-4408)

(This item was advanced in the meeting agenda, in order to allow the presenters to depart early.)

Undrea Major advised the Committee that the right of way acquisition for the Triad Center Drive interchange at NC 68 is scheduled to begin in May of 2005, with construction scheduled to begin December 19, 2006. The project is currently at the end of the documentation stage. The environmental document, a categorical exclusion, is expected to be completed in March. The project is being evaluated as an intersection modification or possible interchange project. Five alternatives have been developed, two of which have been eliminated.

Several significant issues have arisen in the consideration of the various proposed configurations, including the proximity of wetlands and watercourses, established homes, hotels and an office park, and a parcel of land owned by the Norfolk Southern Railway (NSR), which could potentially be isolated from existing NSR right-of-way by this project. Additional new development has also been planned in the area where the interchange is proposed to be built; correspondence with the developer has been initiated regarding purchasing the property.

There are fewer impacts when modifying the intersection, as opposed to building a new interchange. Modifying the intersection would result in virtually no impacts to the tributaries of the east fork of Deep Creek, and only minor impacts to the east fork of Deep Creek itself, though permits from the Army Corp of Engineers would still be needed. From a transportation standpoint, the I-40 interchange at NC 68 is located only 200 feet to the south, which would place the two interchanges very close to each other. Norfolk Southern, Liberty Trust and other property owners are in favor of the upgraded intersection. For these reasons, construction of an interchange at this location appears less likely, but the final alternative has not yet been selected. A citizens' meeting may be held during March to obtain public input on the remaining alternatives, though Mr. Major felt this was unlikely under the circumstances.

2. 2003 MPO Meeting Schedule and Arrangements

Jeff Sovich reviewed the 2003 MPO meeting schedule. A meeting schedule was included in the handout given to each TAC member. The current TAC meeting time, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm has been retained and all the meetings have been scheduled for Wednesdays. The TAC reviewed their calendars and finding no significant conflicts, expressed general acceptance of the proposed schedule.

3. MTIP Development

Tyler Meyer noted that the MTIP development process is a continuous one. The draft 2004 to 2010 MTIP has been in development over the last year and a half. The development process for this MTIP has been different than for past MTIPs in that no conformity analysis is needed. Because there were no major changes to the projects in the MTIP, adoption can proceed in March, rather than September. Greensboro's MTIP negotiation session with NCDOT was in Raleigh on February 24, 2003. The MTIP document is still under development and will be brought back to the TCC and TAC for review and action at the March 19th meeting. At that time, more information will be brought to both bodies about changes in projects that have occurred, primarily to PART and GTA projects. There are no significant roadway project changes anticipated.

At the MTIP negotiation session, program level finance issues were discussed. None of these issues had major affects on Greensboro's projects. Governor Easley's NC Moving Ahead proposal was discussed. This plan, which would release \$700 million funds from the Highway Trust Fund through the sale of bonds, would require legislative approval. Mike Mills added that this initiative would allow the improvement of rural roads, which would include repaving, adding shoulders to roads, bridges, signs and other ways of improving the safety of rural roads.

Tyler Meyer reviewed the status of major projects in the MTIP. For two proposed interchanges on the Greensboro Urban Loop—at the Cone Boulevard extension and at the Fleming/Lewiston Road connector—the MPO will pursue construction after the Urban Loop is complete. The City of Greensboro intends to request that the legislature add these interchanges to the statutory description in G.S. 136-180 thereby making them eligible for funding through the state Highway Trust Fund. The precedent for such action was set in last year's budget bill, where the Wilmington Bypass description was amended to include an additional interchange, and the Northern Durham Loop description was changed to incorporate whatever is agreed to between the DCHC MPO and the State Board of Transportation in 2003. The proposed U.S. 29 Interchange at Eckerson Road is now included in the draft TIP as a post year project, but after working with NCDOT, a process has been developed where the NCDOT would fund the development of the environmental review, and the City would administer that document. The review would include an environmental document and a preliminary design for the project.

The Greensboro Signal System Replacement Project (project U-4711) is a key priority need because it provides area-wide benefits in reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality. It is essential that this project be implemented within the 2004-2010 time frame. An option for meeting this schedule has been identified, which is described in the resolution presented to the committee. Approximately \$5 to \$6 million in CMAQ funds would be diverted to this project from the construction of R-2612 U.S. 421 Interchanges. Both interchanges are currently funded in the draft TIP at a total estimated cost of \$17 million. This shift would delay one of the two interchanges somewhat, but allow the project to generally keep on track for a timely construction. NCDOT would contribute an additional \$2 to \$3 million in discretionary CMAQ funds to project U-4711. The City of Greensboro will provide local matching funds from the 2000 Transportation Bond. Additional state and federal funds may be sought in the future to support this project. The MPO will work with NCDOT regarding U-4711 and R-2612 construction timing.

The recommended action is for the TAC to approve the resolution to fund the Greensboro Signal System Replacement Project. Don Vaughan moved for approval of the endorsement. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

4. Further Consideration of Southwest Metropolitan Area Boundary Line

Jeff Sovich advised that a proposal was presented in January to amend the Metropolitan Area Boundary (MAB), which was adopted, subject to some revisions requested by the TAC. These revisions were intended to keep the entirety of Greensboro City limits within the MPO area, specifically in the vicinity of Tarrant Road, and the Grandover area. The High Point MPO however, had not yet adopted a resolution that parallels those revisions. But in order for the boundary change to be finalized, both MPOs must adopt the same boundary.

The revision was initiated by Andy Grzymski and Craig Hughes of the High Point MPO to simplify transportation planning and administration along the shared boundary between the two MPOs. The current MAB line follows the annexation agreement boundary, but for transportation planning purposes, following only existing or proposed roadways is more efficient. High Point's initial proposal extended further into Greensboro's Urbanized Area (UZA) along Mackay Road, from Guilford College Road, to High Point Road.

Greensboro staff then made an alternate proposal that resulted in a net gain of land area for Greensboro, mostly within the UZA, while High Point gained approximately 1,700 feet of thoroughfare streets. This proposal met the key objective—setting the boundary based on actual physical features. This was the proposal that was presented to you on 1/22. The High Point MPO previously agreed to and adopted this proposal on November 26th, 2002.

Following our January MPO meeting, Greensboro staff met with High Point staff to discuss the mismatch in the boundary revisions that were adopted, and have collectively identified opportunities for further refinements. Under the new proposal, Greensboro makes net gain of 11,000 feet of thoroughfares. In particular, Greensboro gains Gallimore Dairy Road from NC 68 to Chimney Rock Road; Vickrey Chapel Road from Grandover Parkway to Business 85; and Business 85 from Vickrey Chapel Road to just past the Business 85 / Interstate 85 interchange. Concurrently, High Point gains the northern end of Tarrant Road to Chimney Rock Road. Again the boundary is based on actual physical features.

At present, the MPO has 3 immediate options: adopt the latest proposed revision, and High Point will adopt a parallel amendment; retain the amendment adopted in January and staff will further pursue having High Point adopt a parallel amendment; or take no action, and the boundary will revert to the last mutually adopted line, which is the annexation agreement line.

The benefits of today's proposal are: it addresses the TAC's concern about the Grandover area, by moving the boundary to the other side of Interstate 85; the annexation agreement line, which sets the extent of municipal jurisdiction for Greensboro, High Point, and Jamestown remains unchanged, so the ability of the City of Greensboro to address citizen concerns, and to provide municipal services, including street maintenance, is unaffected; the Greensboro MPO gains more through retaining planning authority over Gallimore Dairy Road, than it loses by ceding Tarrant Road to the High Point MPO; and the original goal of having the MAB line reflect its transportation planning function, is preserved.

The recommended action is to adopt the revised MAB line as proposed. Robbie Perkins moved for approval of the motion to adopt the revised version of the MAB line. Mary Rakestraw seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

5. Other Strategic Reports

Early Action Compact – Jeff Sovich stated that this initiative relates to the 8-hour ozone standard. EPA will issue designations by March 15, 2004. The purpose is to allow proactive jurisdictions in air quality monitoring areas to defer the effective date of the 8-hour ozone attainment designations from 2004 to 2007. Areas that conform by 2007 are then redesignated as attainment and annual conformity determinations will no longer be needed.

Airport Area Transportation Study – Tyler Meyer advised that the airport study is continuing. The meeting scheduled for February has been delayed and will be rescheduled. Staff will continue to provide updates on this study.

Eastern Guilford Track Separation – Craig McKinney advised that through a recent meeting, information was presented concerning the study of near term and long-term improvements to crossings between Greensboro and Burlington. Doug Galyon asked if the speed limit of trains has been accelerated. Scott Rhine advised that certain areas have been increased, but that the full increase to 79 miles per hour would not take effect until key improvements are completed in the corridor.

Other Items

1. Board Member Update – Doug Galyon advised that he was pleased with the outcome of the TIP negotiation session. Also, the first phase of Guilford College Road widening project was let to contract on February 17th, 2003. He advised that the contract would be approved at the March Board of Transportation meeting.

Sandy Carmany reported on the outcome of the regional enhancement grant review committee. Several Projects submitted by Greensboro received enhancement grant funding, including construction of new sidewalks on McKnight Mill Road to the pedestrian bridge on U.S. 29, the Southeast Trail Connector, and installation of landscaping of traffic islands at the NC 68 / US 150 intersection in Oak Ridge.

2. Town Update Opportunity – Gregg Danzer asked if the adjusted urbanized area boundary line in the southeast portion of Guilford County along U.S. 421 would provide for a consistent classification of US 421 south of Greensboro. This is achieved by the adjusted urbanized area boundary prepared for purposes of roadway functional classification. Craig McKinney advised that he would provide a copy of the map and clarify the details of that boundary line.

3. Regional Update

Scott Rhine stated that PART's regional bus service hub opened to the public on February 26th, 2003.

4. Wrap-Up Items

None.

The TAC adjourned at 4:16 p.m.